Jenifer Neils – Olga Palagia (eds.): *From Kallias to Kritias: Art in Athens in the Second Half of the Fifth Century*. De Gruyter, Berlin – Boston 2022. ISBN 978-3-11-068092-8. X, 380 pp. EUR 119.95.

This book comprises the papers presented at an international conference hosted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens in 2019. It includes 18 chapters of individual studies that focus on sculpture, ceramics and architecture of the given period within Athens and its immediate sphere of influence. The chapters are grouped into five sections, "Approaching the Acropolis", "Parthenonian Narratives", "Public Discourse in the Agora", "Cult Places and Their Images", and "Athens Beyond Athens", mostly based on the location or finding spot of the studied material.

Several of the papers deal with hitherto unpublished or incompletely published and interpreted archaeological material (Jacob, Steiner, Rotroff and Lynch, Stewart, Kefalidou, Avramidou, Zarkadas). Some reinterpret particular lesser-known objects from the warehouses of Greek museums (Ignatiou, Goette). A couple of the papers measure spaces and structures on the Athenian Acropolis (Valavanis et al., Manidaki). The value of these contributions is not only in the interpretations they make of their material, but also in the introduction of the material itself.

Many of the papers focus on the iconography of a preserved or partly preserved work of art, monument or a group of works of art (Palagia, Neils, Jacob, Shapiro, Stewart, Leventi, Kefalidou, Zarkadas), while others study the iconography of a particular subject based on a variety of available material with the goal of tracing it back to a lost monument (Fullerton, Williams, Kansteiner). These papers generally offer convincing readings of their material, and thus provide a good basis for future studies focused on the meaning of the images for their producers and public.

A common denominator between most of the papers of the book, besides the chronological and geographical scope, is that they represent rather conventional approaches, relying on well-established methods that require little self-reflection on the part of the scholar. These approaches have their relevance and they are well established for a reason. However, the way the editors frame the book leads the reader to expect topical conceptual thinking regarding the way ancient material is discussed in order to connect it with its proper social context – with the people who created it, used it and viewed it – and therefore the lack of this theoretical level in the papers becomes conspicuous. In the very first sentence of the Preface, Palagia and Neils associate the book with the "visual turn" in the humanities, and the increased status of material culture alongside the textual. The editors emphasize the importance of the archaeological and historic contexts of art and artifacts and the contributors' focus on the political and social aspects of art. They hope that the book demonstrates the relevance of Classical Athenian art for a broader field of scholarship and for upcoming generations of students and scholars, that "a change of perspective reveals the unexpected still lurking beneath the surface" (p. 7).

Some of the papers match these parameters better than others. Opening the first section of the book, Panos Valavanis and his associates calculate the capacity of the open-air sacred space on the Athenian Acropolis and the mobility of people it enabled, discussing the effects that 5th century modifications of the space had on the visibility of the ceremonial slaughtering. The steady increase of capacity of participants is plausibly associated with the new democratic institutions and the need to involve more people in worship and in public affairs. The authors address the need to theoretically connect their calculations to the experience of the Athenian people by discussing the concept of "structural movement" (p. 14). Unfortunately, the rather technical aims of this article do not yet allow the concept to be applied in practice.

In her article, Ann Steiner publishes the pottery excavated in the 1930s at the Tholos of the Athenian Agora used for the communal dinners of the prytaneis of the Athenian Council. The capacities of the black-glazed commensal vessels corresponded to the standard units of measurement, used not only in the shops and taverns of the Agora, but also to distinguish the four property classes into which citizens fell. This enables Steiner to suggest that the dining vessels might have been a way of demonstrating the equal responsibilities of the entrusted officials regardless of their differing means and social class. Steiner begins with an archaeological context that can be associated with a distinct group of people and a specific social function, and never lets her material lead her very far from this context. Consequently, the article convincingly deals with an important aspect of the social significance of the pottery for its users.

In some of the articles, the original location and use of the studied object is unclear, and therefore the focus is on their discovery. Despina Ignatiadou proposes persuasively that a monumental bronze griffin paw excavated on the Pnyx in the 19th century was part of a famous sundial from the second half of the 5th century, created by the Athenian astronomer Meton. Hans Rupprecht Goette associates two peculiar reliefs of Herakles found at Sounion with a local Herakleion. The consequences of these propositions – how were the objects seen and used in their particular contexts? – receive relatively little attention, which is understandable within the limits of a single article.

However, if an image is only discussed in the light of available literary sources and parallel images, there is a risk that its social significance will be exhausted by its association with a certain subject, location and historical period. This type of general contextualization bypasses the complex, multi-sensuous relationship the viewers of an image had with the image in its specific function (see e.g. the special issue of *Art History* 41 [2018], edited by M. Gaifman and V. Platt; for discussions of the viewing of ancient art, see the work of scholars like J. Elsner, R. Osborne, V. Platt, M. Squire, and J. Trimble, among others). Moreover, such simplified framing allows one to neglect discussing one's general conceptualization of image and its viewing. An oil painting or a photograph is never

an objective document of its subject and its cultural significance is inseparably tied to the ways it communicates with its diverse audiences, and the ways audiences are able to conceptualize its messages. The same applies to ancient vase painting and sculpture.

Eurydice Kefalidou's article focuses on the fragments of a large Attic red-figure plate excavated in 2016 in Piraeus. The vessel's paintings include at least the Dioskouroi and *kalathiskos* dancers. Kefalidou pays appropriate attention to the traces of prolonged use in the object, but her suggestions for the significance of the plate's imagery is a reflection on the geopolitical history of the time, dominated by the "Spartan character" of the subjects. In his article H. Alan Shapiro suggests that a series of red-figure paintings from the latter half of the 5th century representing certain types of groups of men should be associated with the circles of conservative oligarchs who were responsible for the coups against the Athenian democracy in 411 and 404, and, in Shapiro's view, might have commissioned the vases in question. The fascinating theme of visual self-representation is extinguished under the blanket of sophisticated iconographic discussion. Angelos Zarkadas studies an Attic red-figure hydria, found in Thera, and associates its painting of Boreas and Oreithyia with a particular literary version of the myth emphasizing its connection with Athens. But what about the function of the hydria as a cinerary vase? Why is the hypothesis that it contained the ashes of a young girl who died before marriage only mentioned in passing in the last paragraph?

Dyfri Williams's article about the cityscape of Athens as seen "through the eyes" of 5th century vase-painters aims at exploring "the manner in which Athenian vase-painters approached the physical environments of their imagined narratives and how they became entangled with those that they actually knew, leading them to create simultaneously multiple identities and multiple moments in time, evoking complex ideas and emotions in the minds of their eventual users" (p. 235). This article, however, does not discuss the concepts of gaze or viewership, identity or emotions. Instead, it offers speculative readings of highly simplified architectural elements in secondary details of red-figure vase paintings as representations of actual monuments, most of which are only known from literary sources with their own varying relationships to the material reality of 5th century Athens. The artists' and viewers' perspectives on images and image production are forgotten in the process.

Williams's article is not the only one in the book leaning towards the traditional method of "Kopienkritik", the reconstruction of lost works of art on the basis of existing ones. Mark Fullerton studies Alkamenes' statue of Hekate Epipyrgia, that, according to Pausanias, stood at the entrance to the Athenian Acropolis. Preserved sculptures representing Hekate as triple-bodied are used to discuss Alkamenes' Hekate, and the resulting vision of its "archaistic style" is used as an example of the apparent emphasis Athenians put on autochthony from the mid-5th century onwards. Sascha Kansteiner's title "Statues of Asclepius Created by Athenian Artists: Written Sources and Copies of a 5th -Century Prototype" speaks for itself. Even Iphigeneia Leventi's discussion of the iconography of

female figures in Attic votive reliefs aims to demonstrate that the most popular sartorial types used in the period derived from lost cult statues. The accuracy of artistic prototypes, reconstructed in the spirit of "Kopienkritik", is ultimately impossible to prove, since our knowledge of them usually comes from equivocal literary sources. Even more importantly, if the primary interest in a given object is not the object itself, but the scholar's vision (no matter how learned) of an inexistent object 'behind' it, there is a serious risk of losing sight of one's actual material and its specific socio-historical and archaeological context. (For a critical discussion of "Kopienkritik", see E. K. Gazda 2002, "Beyond Copying: Artistic Originality and Tradition", in E. K. Gazda (ed.), *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity*, Ann Arbor MI, 1–24.)

Finally, several of the articles in the book aim at reconstructing decorations of Athenian monuments from the latter part of the 5th century BCE on the basis of their existing remains. Palagia's and Neils's articles are iconographic studies of the sculptures of, respectively, the metopes and the west pediment of the Parthenon, producing convincing identifications of particular scenes or figures. Especially Palagia's interpretation is admirably economical. Raphaël Jacob attributes the sculptural fragments that he found in the Acropolis Museum storerooms to the pediments of the Parthenon. Vasileia Manidaki has painstakingly documented the uppermost masonry courses of the interior walls of the Parthenon, and argues on this basis that a decorated inner frieze ran around the walls of the cella. Andrew Stewart's article is a summary of the work done by his team in publishing and analysing the unpublished sculpture from the Agora associable with the temple of Athena Pallenis (ca. 433–425 BCE), moved from its original location to the Agora at the time of Augustus and rededicated to Mars. The impressive results of these studies wait to be placed in their political, social and religious contexts.

All in all, this book is an indispensable read for specialized scholars studying the specific material or subjects discussed in the articles. However, before expecting to inspire a wider audience, scholars of ancient visual culture should ask themselves (and explain to others), how we figure out the relationship between the material being studied and the actual people who produced and used it. Answering this difficult question forces us to reach for the conceptual level that connects art and artifacts to the culture as a whole, and allows them to speak to the scholars and students interested in the same culture – or any culture anytime.

Ville Hakanen
University of Helsinki